

PM speaking notes in response to demonstrations in Ottawa

31 January 2022

Hello everyone. *Bonjour tout le monde.*

Ce matin, je veux m'adresser aux millions de Canadiens qui font des choix responsables pour assurer leur sécurité et celle de leurs proches.

Je sais que cette pandémie est frustrante.

It's frustrating that after two years, the battle against COVID-19 is still dominating so many parts of our lives.

This virus affects all of us. Two of my own children have now contracted it and it's impacting my family once again. It's a big challenge that my family and I are facing. But there's nothing unusual or special about it. It's a challenge too many Canadians and people around the world know all too well.

Durant cette pandémie, il y a des gens qui ont perdu des êtres chers.

Nos travailleurs de la santé continuent de faire un travail acharné.

Les scientifiques travaillent jour et nuit pour s'assurer qu'on ait des vaccins pour se protéger.

This pandemic is not over and we have to be there for one another.

And as we continue to have each other's backs –

As we steel ourselves for the challenges ahead –

I know you're wondering about what you saw in your capital city this weekend.

As my friend Irwin Cotler said on Saturday: "Freedom of expression, assembly, and association are cornerstones of democracy; but Nazi symbolism, racist imagery, and desecration of war memorials are not. It is an insult to memory and truth."

Hate can never be the answer.

[Pause]

Over the past few days, Canadians were shocked, and frankly, disgusted, by the behaviour displayed by some people protesting in our nation's capital.

I want to be very clear: we're not intimidated by those who hurl abuse at small business workers and steal food from the homeless.

We won't give in to those who fly racist flags.

We won't cave to those who engage in vandalism, or dishonour the memory of our veterans.

[APG]

La statue de Terry Fox et la Tombe du Soldat inconnu ne sont pas seulement des symboles du passé. Ce sont des points marquants de notre histoire qui représentent des héros canadiens. Les sacrifices de ces héros nous ont donné la chance de bâtir un Canada meilleur.

Tous les Canadiens ont le droit d'exprimer leur opinion ou leur désaccord avec leur gouvernement. Mais ils n'ont pas le droit de menacer ou de harceler leurs concitoyens, ni de partager des messages de haine.

I want to thank the many Canadians who have made donations to the Shepherds of Good Hope and to the Terry Fox Foundation in response to what they saw this weekend.

There is no place in our country for threats, violence, or hatred.

So to those responsible for this behavior: it needs to stop.

To those brandishing the swastikas and the Confederate flags: put them down.

To the people who joined the convoy, but who are deeply uncomfortable with the symbols of hatred and division on display: join with your fellow Canadians, be courageous, and speak out.

[Pause]

En ces temps difficiles, tous les politiciens doivent démontrer du leadership responsable.

On doit travailler pour rassembler les gens de manière positive.

On doit lutter contre la division avec de la compassion.

To the politicians exploiting people's fears: I ask you to think long and hard about the consequences of your actions.

To the nearly 90% of truckers across the country who've gotten vaccinated, who continue working hard to keep us fed and keep our economy moving: thank you.

The behaviour displayed this weekend does not represent you.

[Pause]

And to Canadians at home, watching in disgust and disbelief at this behaviour, wondering how this could have happened in our nation's capital after everything we've been through together:

This is not the story of the pandemic, of our country, of our people.

Canada is strong because you are strong.

Pendant près de deux ans, les Canadiens ont fait preuve de force, de générosité et de respect.

Vous avez démontré votre courage.

Vous avez fait des sacrifices.

For nearly two years, you've been there for each other, as neighbours, friends, and fellow Canadians.

I think of the moms and dads who looked after their families.

The kids who helped out at home.

[APG]

Seniors, who stayed strong in the darkest of days.

Volunteers throughout our communities who supported our most vulnerable.

Frontline workers – from truckers to store clerks – who have kept our shelves stocked and made sure we had food on our tables.

Healthcare heroes who have saved countless lives, and continue to do so. We know you're tired, and yet you do not stop. You inspire us. Canadians support you. We're in your corner.

All of you, you are the story of this pandemic.

Cette pandémie, c'est aussi l'histoire de millions de personnes qui ont fait les bons choix, qui se sont fait vacciner et qui ont fait des sacrifices pour assurer leur sécurité et celle des autres.

Je peux vous dire que je vais continuer d'encourager les gens à se faire vacciner, que ce soit pour les doses de rappel ou les vaccins pour les enfants.

Je vais continuer d'être là pour vous.

[Pause]

I wish I could tell you there are no more difficult moments ahead.

We all know I can't say that. But what I can say is your government will have your back for as long as it takes, with whatever it takes.

Because we believe in you.

Canadians are compassionate, kind, strong and resilient.

You elected us to get big things done and, with the return of Parliament, we have work to do.

Later today, I'll be participating in question period, an important part of our democratic system.

Our government will be focused on getting things done for Canadians and working together with all Parliamentarians. I look forward to all parties working constructively with the government to deliver results for people.

[This afternoon, we'll be introducing legislation to ensure we continue providing as many rapid tests as we can to the provinces and territories.]

And tonight, I'll be addressing the House of Commons about the situation in Ukraine. I'll be talking about the importance of freedom, democracy and the rule of law in the face of Russian provocation.

In this difficult time, more than ever, we have to stay true to our values. And that's exactly what I will continue to do.

Thank you.

[APG]